

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action, Applicants submit herewith a certified translation of Applicants' priority document so as to perfect the claim of priority to JP 2002-246458, thereby providing the instant application with an effective filing date of August 27, 2002. Turning to the pending rejection of claims 1-11, the rejection is based in-part on USP Pub. No. 2005/0132306 (the '306 reference) to Smith. The '306 reference claims priority to a PCT application having a priority date of June 4, 2003. Thus, the effective filing date of the instant application precedes the effective filing date of the '306 reference, and therefore the '306 reference does not constitute prior art to the instant application. As such, the pending rejection of claims 1-11 must be withdrawn. It is noted that while the PCT application claims priority to additional applications, the claim is to continuation-in-part applications. If any of these applications are utilized in a subsequent rejection, Applicants will address such rejections when the specific portion of the continuation-in-part application relied upon to formulate the rejection is identified.

Having fully responded to all matters raised in the Office Action, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, an indication for which is respectfully solicited.

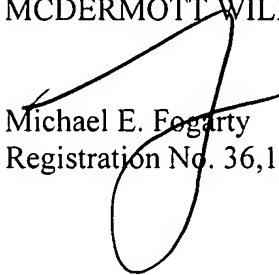
If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper,

including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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